The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

AUGUST 1948

The Faith That Dares

By JOHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL

Four Solemn Words

By ALLAN A. HUNTER

One-Man Revolution

By HAROLD BLAKE WALKER

The Cup of Trembling

By WESNER FALLAW

The Conquest of Doubt

By K. MORGAN EDWARDS

Teaching Religion Through Worship

By WESLEY M. WESTERBERG

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*

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In the September Pulpit

Next month's issue of the Pulpit will have a sermon by Alan Walker, Australian Methodist who is in Holland as official delegate of the Methodist Church of Australasia at the Amsterdam conference. It is entitled, "Christianity on the Offensive," and is part of a forthcoming book by Dr. Walker to be published in England. "All the Brothers Were Valiant," preached by Boynton Merrill at the National Council of Congregational and Christian Churches last month, is a sermon on the text, "Except your brother be with you, ye shall not even see my face," was presented when tension was high in the debate over the question of union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church. There will be two Labor Day sermons, one of them by Clarence E. Lemmon, on the topic "What Are We Working For?" Dr. Lemmon's text is from Nehemiah, 4:6c. The other is by J. Robert Gray and is entitled "The Three Stonecutters." A sermon by Franklin D. Elmer on "Choosing Your Way to Faith" completes the list of excellent sermon offerings. There will be another article by Wesley M. Westerberg. In September Mr. Westerberg will discuss "Teaching a Congregation to Worship." This is the second in a series of three articles on this subject. The September Pulpit will feature a full page of illustrations from the pen of Marshall Wingfield. In addition there will be the usual features: a pastoral prayer, a sermon for young people and the new sermon review column, "Speaking of Sermons."

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

Minister of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, Rev. John Sutherland Bonnell is also known as a lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary and as a radio broadcaster. His program, "Our Spiritual Life," is carried over WJZ and the Blue network during the winter months.

Rev. Allan A. Hunter *was for several years a leader in the National* Council of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In 1925-26 he visited Japan and China for the Fellowship of Youth for Peace. He is minister of Mount Hollywood Congregational Church, Los Angeles.

A year ago this month Rev. Harold Blake Walker *came to the pulpit of First* Presbyterian Church, Evanston Ill., from that of First Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City. Dr. Walker received his later education at Denver University, Boston University and Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago.

Rev. Wesner Fallaw *is head of the religious education department, Andover* Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass. He was formerly minister of education at the Congregational Church, Winnetka, Ill. At one time Dr. Fallaw was on the faculty of Furman University, Greenville, S. C.

Minister of the First Methodist Church, Glendale, Calif., Rev. K. Morgan Edwards is a graduate of Drew Theological Seminary. He has also done graduate work at Princeton and at the University of Southern California. For two years he was lecturer in homiletics at the latter institution.

Rev. Millard M. Gifford *is minister of the First Reformed Church, Passaic,* N. J. He is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, from which institution he also earned an S. T. M. degree in 1941.

A former teacher of religion at Evanston Collegiate Institute, Evanston, Ill., Rev. Wesley M. Westerberg is now pastor of the First Methodist Church, Naperville, Ill. He has studied at the Union Scandinavian School of Theology, Gothenberg, Sweden, Drew Theological Seminary and Yale Divinity School. From the latter school he was awarded the degree, S. T. M.

Rev. Ware W. Wimberly *is minister of the Presbyterian Church, Wabash, Ind.*

Rev. Carl S. Weist *is pastor of the Community Church, Mt. Vernon, N. Y.*

Rev. Don E. Smucker *is on the faculty of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Ill.*

Rev. King D. Beach *is minister of the First Methodist Church, Jackson, Mich.*

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

THE synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church had already voted, 33 to 1, in favor of the merging with the Congregational Christian denomination. But the voting by local churches on the Congregational side had fallen short of the 75 per cent approval which has been set as the goal prerequisite to official action. Their National Council faced this situation when it met in biennial session at Oberlin, Ohio, in June. For four days the Council wrestled with the problem of reconciling the opponents and proponents of union. The opponents based their case on the claim that the proposed basis of union did not effectively protect the Congregational principle of local church autonomy. They insisted upon a series of interpretations designed to safeguard this principle. The proponents held that these interpretations were unnecessary, but finally yielded to their adoption as a guide to future action. By a vote of 990 to 13 the merger was finally approved amid great enthusiasm. The intention is to carry this action back to the no-voting and non-voting churches in the hope that the full 75 per cent (or more) for approval will be secured. By bringing together these two families of Protestantism—one having its roots in Europe, the other in New England—their union will be unique among the numerous denominational mergers that have yet taken place. It can become both an inspiration and a model for other mergers and even for a more comprehensive union of Protestantism.

Congregationalists Vote for Merger

The Book of the Month

THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK. *By Kenneth Scott Latourette. Harper & Brothers,* 2.50.

IF YOU wish to have your mind expanded, stretched far beyond its habitual capacity, read this book. It is written by a scholar who has accustomed himself to deal in large historical magnitudes, to see things whole, to discover tides and trends in Christian history which our more provincial observations and prejudices do not sense. Limited as we are by our parochial and contemporary outlook, we easily adopt a false view of the total movement of Christianity in the world. We need to be transported to a high place from which we can view the wider scene. What Arnold Toynbee does for us with respect to the age-long movements of civilization, Dr. Latourette does with respect to the worldwide movements of the Christian church. His seven-volume history of the Expansion of Christianity is recognized as a monumental achievement. His present book is based upon this masterly work. It is a prophecy of the future of Christianity such as only a historian is competent to make. The author sees Christianity as still young. "We are living in the early days of the church." The future, he believes, rests with Protestantism. He lays great stress on the ecumenical and the missionary movements.

A Thought for the Month

ONE of the hardest things for modern man to accept is the Christian claim that once, and once for all, at a definite moment in the distant past, there emerged the ultimate criterion by which all history and all human achievement must evermore be judged. Yet Christianity makes no less a claim than this for the historical person of Jesus Christ. The inhibition on accepting this claim arises from the fact that we possess a vast body of knowledge which was unknown to the ancients. It is assumed that our salvation will be found in present knowledge, not in past history. The fallacy here, I believe, lies in the modern way of thinking of history as a long line of evolutionary progress. In this view, we stand at the pinnacle of history, and from our eminence we are able to pronounce judgments on the past. The idea that a criterion could have emerged in the distant past by which *we* are to be judged is repugnant and humiliating. It seems to me that modern man has deceived himself by his obsession with a linear image of a progressive historical ascent. We would have a truer image if we conceived of history, not as a line, but as a vast plane upon which human life deploys itself in all directions away from and toward a center. The historical process would then be envisaged, not as an ascent, but as an approach to the center or a wandering away from it. The character of a civilization would be measured by its distance from the center—far away would spell chaos, suffering, war; near by would spell order, happiness, justice. What, then, would be the center? Nothing else than God and his will for man. As Christians, we are left in no doubt concerning the precise location of this center of history. It is marked by the historical figure of Jesus Christ, in whom the living God definitely unveiled his presence and his character with irresistible authenticity. "I," said Jesus, "if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me!"

The Center Of History

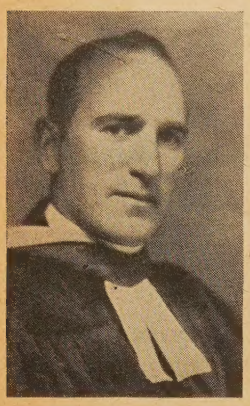
Charles Clayton Morrison

The Faith That Dares

By JOHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL

And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. Luke 9:43.

ONE cold winter morning, very near the beginning of my ministry, I was urgently summoned to a general hospital. As I went to the emergency entrance I saw a box sleigh and on a mattress in it a young boy was lying, his face as white as death. Swiftly he was transferred to a stretcher and taken to the operating room. Later, as the surgeon emerged, the father of the boy rushed up to him and said: "Doctor, can you help us? Can you save my son?" There was pain in the doctor's eyes as he looked sadly at the father and said: "I am terribly sorry; there is not a thing we can do."



That episode is indelibly engraved upon my mind, for to me it is an epitome of man's helplessness in the face of tragic human need.

Always this occurrence comes back to me as I read of the happening at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration. While our Lord, with three of his disciples, was enwrapped in the glory of heaven, the remaining nine disciples stood at the base of the mountain, in the valley, surrounded by the scribes and Pharisees and a great crowd of people.

THE DISCIPLES ARE RIDICULED

These religious leaders, discovering the disciples in the absence of their Master, began to badger them with taunts and questions.

At this juncture a distracted father arrived with his stricken son. He pleaded with the disciples to cure him. As they stood looking at the sick boy, they knew that their Master had often healed maladies such as this. One after the other they stepped forth and tried to help him. They entreated, but they were not heard; they commanded, but they were not obeyed. One by one they tried, and one by one they failed. Still the boy writhed in torment, and every moment the crowd grew more hostile and more scornful.

Just at the height of the crisis, someone in the crowd shouted: "Look yonder, the Galilean is coming!" As the crowd turned in the direction indicated they saw Jesus making his way down the mountainside.

With one accord the whole crowd surged toward him. Suddenly they stopped in bewilderment. They were thunderstruck. An awed silence fell upon them. They looked at Jesus in amazement. They had seen him before, but now there was something strangely different in his appearance.

For a clue to their astonishment, we must go back to the account of what happened on the holy mountain. Luke says, "The fashion of his countenance was altered." In Dr. Moffatt's translation the meaning is much clearer: "The appearance of his face was altered."

He had been going through a time of dreadful testing as he faced the ordeal of the cross. But now all the lines of care, of anxiety and of tension had relaxed, and the glory and majesty of God was reflected in his face. Even the most thoughtless in the crowd sensed something of the afterglow of the transfiguration.

POWER IN BELIEF

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai where he had received the Law from God it is recorded that the skin of Moses' face shone, and he "wist not that it shone." How much more true must this have been on the face of Jesus!

The awed silence was broken by a pitiful cry: "Master, I beseech thee look upon my son, for he is mine only child. I besought thy disciples to heal him and they could not. If thou canst do anything have compassion on us and help us."

Jesus turned his compassionate gaze upon the father, and replied: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

In a voice broken with sobs, the father answered: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

For a moment the Master stood looking down at the helpless child and then uttered a word of command that called for divine energies beyond man's power either to compute or to understand, and the stricken child was made whole.

What an unexpected climax was this! Just a few moments before, the disciples had stood baffled and defeated, surrounded by the jeering crowd. Now the multitude is hushed into silence by a demonstration of "the mighty power of God." What was it that so dramatically changed defeat into victory? Was it not this: the Lord of the disciples came over the horizon and took his place in their midst?

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

Two theories have been offered as to the manner in which the transformation of the world must be wrought. The first is that man can accomplish the task alone; his wisdom and his skill will legislate and engineer a new world into being.

A little over eighty years ago the Secularist League meeting in Europe published a manifesto declaring: "Science has made God unnecessary." Millions of people since that day have lived on this presumption. But we who have survived World War II have ex-

perienced the shock of a shattering disillusionment. The brutal logic of events has forever ended man's naive hope of inevitable human progress. Today we are the victims, not the masters, of these blind, materialistic forces we have unleashed, and everyone is afraid.

Science has made God unnecessary! Nay, say, rather, science without God is an abyss into which no thinking man dare direct his gaze.

GOD AND MAN—TOGETHER

In the second place, there are those who tell us that God alone will build his Kingdom on earth; that man must be submissive and inactive; he must simply wait for the divine fulfillment. They assure us that all the efforts we made for world betterment are doomed to frustration; that some day God will flash forth with all-conquering power from heaven and make a new world. The final truth is in neither of these theories.

Ever since the day of Pentecost God has been teaching his church that the Kingdom will come neither by man's unaided effort nor by divine fiat, but through God and man working in harmony. Man is the instrument or agent of the divine power and the fulfiller of the divine will. Only as our willful hearts are brought into accord with the purposes of the Eternal God will peace ever dawn upon this broken and war-scarred world. Only then shall we witness the fulfillment of that

> One far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

Have you ever noticed that pessimism, fear and despair are contagious? They pass through a crowd from person to person like a charge of electricity.

It was so with the disciples of Jesus. They were unnerved by the fierceness of the opposition. They hesitated, faltered, and failed. They saw only the incredulous crowd—blank, staring, unbelieving faces—and they were stampeded by fear.

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

Every morning in New York city hundreds of thousands of persons tune in on their radios. What do they hear? They learn of impending industrial conflicts; airplane disasters; forest fires; hunger and want and misery around the world; angry words spoken in the United Nations Assembly; hostility and hate, suspicions and fear; and over all the dreadful threat of World War III, until the hearts of men and women are filled with foreboding and fear.

Depressed and bewildered, they carry their pessimism out into the day until the whole of society is plagued with fear.

Let us remember that defeat and despair were changed for the disciples into resounding triumph when Christ came over the horizon and took his rightful place in their midst! The Christian church, like the disciples of old, is all too often baffled and defeated, but once the Master appears and takes his place in the heart and center of the church, power goes forth that makes the world stand in awe.

"If thou canst believe," said Jesus, "all things are possible to him that believeth." How remarkable that the divine power can be restrained and hindered by the unbelief of man! Says the Gospel record: "He could do there no mighty work because of their unbelief." Man's unbelief throws up a barrier against the operation of God's power because we are not automata, but children gifted with freedom of will. Only through loving and willing obedience can we serve our Maker.

God's mercy is like a boundless sea, but man has built retaining walls to confine it. The divine mercy beats endlessly against these barriers. When here and there a gate is flung wide open, the power of Almighty God flows through joyously and triumphantly on its mission of healing and redemption.

I know not what your special need is this morning, but I know that there are hundreds of problems represented in this great congregation: some lives are weighed down with burdens heavier than they can bear; others are fretted with inner tensions and unresolved conflicts, and a smiling face oftentimes conceals an aching heart. The unremitting struggle against base desires or the sense of futility and frustration robs life of its joy.

The day of victory will dawn for each of you the moment you see Christ come over the horizon and take his place in the very center of your life. Call upon Christ for help; fill your life with Christ, and there is no moral or spiritual problem that will remain unsolved.

A CHRIST-FILLED MINISTER

What happens when Christ takes possession of a human life? Well, I witnessed an unmistakable answer to that question just seven years ago. A Sunday afternoon meeting was held on the grounds of a country estate in Florida. The speaker was one of the best-known Christians in the world, Sir Wilfred Grenfell.

We sat there enthralled, listening to his words, and looking into his sun-tanned, weather-beaten face. He told how even at the height of Labrador blizzards he journeyed with his dog team to the home of some poor fisherman on an errand of mercy. As he related his experiences we knew that he brought to the suffering not only skillful hands, but also a loving heart.

Then he told of a day when from the shore they saw a fishing vessel with a distress signal flying. He put out in a boat, and found on the schooner an eighteen-year-old girl. She had shipped aboard as a cook. A few days earlier she had prematurely given birth to a baby, and was almost at the point of death.

Tenderly ministering to her, Dr. Grenfell saw that medical skill could offer no aid. Her life was gradually slipping away. He spoke to her gently of One who said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are

heavy laden and I will give you rest," and she found the peace that passeth all understanding.

Then he added: "We laid her tenderly away on a headland jutting out into the Atlantic, and from its summit you could see far across the restless waters. Over the grave I planted a rude wooden cross on which were carved the compassionate words of Jesus: 'Neither do I condemn thee.' "

What a world this would be if men and women would open their lives as Grenfell did to the inflowing power of Christ! Little wonder that he reminded people of the Master. Faith is energy; faith is force; faith is a creative influence that transforms men and women into Christlikeness.

Do you believe that this task is worth while? Then take your place in the ranks of Christian workers in this church. Make your life count for God, and the day will come when the unthinking, heedless, churchless multitudes will turn their feet into the way of God's commandments and his Kingdom will come with a suddenness that will be the wonder of the world.

Four Solemn Words

By ALLAN A. HUNTER

In the beginning God . . . Genesis 1:1.

IMAGINE you are one of a wandering tribe on the desert long ago. The stars are ablaze. The family huddles together by the palmleaf fire. You look out at all the expanse around and above. Then you glance within.

"I wonder," you think aloud, "how it all started." You have touched off the poet of the nomadic tribe. He stands up and recites by heart the ancient story. With deep feeling and with strong gesture he enunciates the stanzas which the centuries have sifted as finely as the dunes: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth . . . And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good. . . . And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass . . . and the earth brought forth grass. . . . And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind . . . and it was so. . . . And God said, Let us make man in our image. . . . So God created man in his own image. . . . And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

FOUNDATION FOR A GREAT FAITH

Or imagine this. It is many generations later. You are a boy in Nazareth. You ask the wise man in the synagogue to take you back, back, back to where all inquiring minds soon or late are driven. He can read, so he unrolls the sheepskin, and with reverence you set yourself to listen. But the first four solemn words are so arresting you hear no further: "In the beginning—God!"

Into those first four words of the Bible and what immediately follows, tremendously important truth is packed. Here we see the unique genius of the people who chose God and were therefore called the chosen people. The record of what is revealed to them they put in narrative form. Their thought of what is ultimate in the nature of things is not so much speculative as dynamic, dramatic. It has tempo. Always something is happening, something is being done. That is their amazing approach. "Without a parable," Mark says of Jesus, "spake he not unto them."

But the parable before us—where in wonder we behold the heaven and earth being created, then the sun and moon, the grass, the beasts and the whole cosmic work coming to a climax in man—all this is a different kind of truth from the facts of science. If you want sophomores in college to say "Thank God I'm an atheist," just teach them in Sunday school before they take any courses in biology, paleontology or anthropology that the Genesis account of how vegetation and human life came to be is accurate in the textbook sense of accuracy. It won't do.

FACTS OF SCIENCE—AND LIFE

God is truth as well as love and one way to him is to be true to the integrity he has given us. Aren't we false to that integrity if we pretend that it took him only twenty-four hours to hang up the sun and moon in the heavens and another twenty-four hours to start the beasts of the earth multiplying? We cannot really love this eager-minded generation of young people if in the interests of a timid religion we twist the truth about the creation of the world. To be sure, we don't dare be frank with them unless we first care for them. Love and truth are inseparable.

Which brings us to the point. The Creator has done and is doing a bigger job than our forefathers lacking our telescopes and electro-microscopes could ever guess. There isn't a chance that it all happened by chance, and the time has come to make this widely clear.

The author of *Human Destiny* is outspoken. "It

is totally impossible," he writes, "to account scientifically for all phenomena pertaining to Life, its development and progressive evolution." Read all you can of the book. It is by a doctor of science who is internationally known for reducing the speed with which wounds heal to a mathematical formula. His name is Du Nouy. Chance alone, he brings out, would not explain the appearance of a single molecule necessary for the development of life in its lowest form. To say that chance can explain the emergence of life in its highest forms, especially in personality, is to say nothing. Like the psychologist insisting he had made up his windpipe he had no mind!

Science attempts to weigh and measure things in mathematical terms. Its knowledge is "subjective and conditioned by the structure of the brain." It does not deal with meaning, with what we are here to appreciate and respond to with all our being. The Bible account of creation does not chalk up on the blackboard what the laboratory specialists in their field are pretty sure is so. Rather it suggests by a story the supreme Fact beyond all measured facts, the all-including Meaning that takes in all tangible meanings—and that is the Presence which is the source and goal of all life. "In the beginning, God." At the end, as well. Always, always God.

BACK OF THE MYSTERY—GOD

Within that vast framework we need fear no fact that any scientific findings may bring forth. What if it did take a billion years for life to channel itself into human consciousness, and before that another billion years for the planet to cool sufficiently to enable the divine conspiracy of carbon, hydrogen and other molecules to produce protoplasm where no life was before? What if before that it took nobody knows how many billion years to make the nucleus of the atom which a split second ago we human beings forced to misbehave? In the beginning—back, underneath, pervading and greater than all this mystery—is—God.

The purpose of the Bible is not to analyze how we got started but to point toward where we are headed. It is not to diagram the shape of gills our ancestors may once have had, but the kind of grace and truth we have it in us to become. What we need is to sense life as a whole struggling to incarnate at last the quality of being we see in Jesus.

LIFE'S AGONIZING EFFORT

Nature does not have the last word, but it can serve as a medium in which we can learn some valuable lessons. Those huge, sluggish, armor-plated sovereigns of the bloody jungle that a few score million years ago left their 52-inch footprint in the Arizona desert are not impressive. I'll tell you what is breathtaking. It's a tiny bewhiskered experiment of the Creator you could hold in your hand whom the dinosaur could crush with one toe. He had no teeth to speak of, no claws that could frighten anybody. When it got cold and the scaly mammoths went to sleep, he shivered. Why mention him, then? Because he was sensitive. He could learn through suffering. He was the growing edge of that capacity to pay attention and respond out of which you and I at last emerged. Laugh at the tree shrew, if you will. It is quite possibly because evolution was permitted to have its way through him that you are able to laugh. That poor chimpanzee over in the zoo who puts on such a Sunday show for the boys spitting through the wire, is not our ancestor. The apes are wonderful but they are dead-ends in life's agonizing effort to break through into incarnation.

THE PLACE OF EVOLUTION

Don't be too shocked by some of the gory details of that slimy, billion-year effort called evolution. The female ant, for example, that makes friends with and influences the subjects of the queen and then at exactly the right moment mounts the back and calmly saws off the head of her hostess and seats herself on the throne as unchallenged empress ("Long live the new queen!", all the other ants by their behavior shout) is not quite a fair picture of the process. We have as always to try to see it whole. Of course there are pain, frustration and darkness. But there is also life, life in its broad sweep, life that is getting at something. W. H. Hudson was convinced that our feathered sisters are afflicted with fear ranging from "slight disquiet" to "agonizing terror." The hermit thrush, who flew to our backyard from the high sierras in the face of many difficulties, would not perhaps so testify. Nor would the winter wren up there on Mt. Hollywood trail.

WE CAN SEE GOD

You and I have a strangely overprivileged place in this upward movement—of mind subduing matter, spirit struggling to identify itself with what is beyond surface intellect—where the creatures play their humbler part. Whatever they may be, *we* are the power to choose, nothing less than a capacity for God. The ants were fixed in their habits 40,000,000 years ago. You and I are not so stuck. We can repent. We can turn away from the blind alleys of the past and go in a new direction. The migrants from the north can sing when the tides of spring flood their smooth brains. You and I can be aware, consciously rejoicing in that audible sign of an eternal grace. We can sense at least a little of what the Bible would indicate—"In the beginning, God." But more than that, we can follow through, again at least a little, toward the end. The goal we can realize however dimly not with the analysis of science but with an intuition of the spirit.

A visitor asked a saint if he could look over his library. He was taken to the saint's room. No books were in sight. "There is my library," said the saint, pointing to a simple wooden cross.

The wisdom and power that come through Jesus on the cross are the only satisfying answer to the

questions with which creation, sometimes red in tooth and claw, tantalizes us. Nature does not explain the cross. It is the cross that throws the light we need on nature and all else.

You sitting there and I standing here are not accidents. We are here for a reason. In the beginning, now and always, there is point to our existence. We are on earth to become like Christ who shows what the Creator has in mind for us.

"How far spiritually can we go?" some young men once asked a good man in the forest. The good man's reply is apt: "You can be as holy as you *want* to be."

One-Man Revolution

By HAROLD BLAKE WALKER

If a man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. II Corinthians 5:17.

THE Fourth of July, in 1845, fell on Friday. The weather, according to the newspapers of the day, was fair. The Concord newspaper reported that an aged woman had been burned to death in Malone, N. Y., and somewhere in Mississippi five persons were murdered in cold blood. The remainder of the news was mine run. The editorials of the leading newspaper that Independence Day were pessimistic in tone. Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune* mourned the fact that America had let the principles of independence languish. "A few men are wanted," said the *Tribune,* "able to think and act upon principles of eternal value." The Concord *Freeman,* grieving over the premature decay of Massachusetts, remarked: "The memory of her renown still lives, but the fire has gone out. The state must be redeemed."

Weather reports are not available for the first century of the Christian era and records of current events are meager. The editorial mood of the day, however, is akin to that of 1845. John of Ephesus was writing anxiously to the church in Sardis saying: "You have the name of being alive, but you are dead. Awake and strengthen what remains." Quite literally, John was telling the Christians at the end of the first century that "the fire has gone out." He pleaded for repentance and wakefulness as the alternatives to doom.

MAN IS IN DANGER

The editorial mood of 1948 is but an echo of yesterday, and yet it is inspired by a new note of urgency. Norman Cousins remarks pertinently that "modern man is obsolete" because in the course of the centuries he has changed everything but himself. *Life* magazine warns editorially that "the thing for us to fear today is not the atom, but the nature of man, lest he lose either his conscience or his humility before the inherent mysteries of things." Writing in the *New York Times,* Anne O'Hare McCormick remarks pertinently that people are groping today for moral and spiritual leadership to save them from themselves.

Our difficulty inheres in the fact that the fires of the spirit have been thoroughly sprinkled by "the huge army of the world's desires." We have been enslaved by the tyranny of things. Our spiritual needs have been obscured by our scientific genius. Our convictions have been dictated by our personal interests. In the realm of mechanics, to define a need is to invite an invention; but in the area of personal and social relations to pose a problem is to precipitate a prejudice. The inventive genius of science and mechanics inheres in the fact that they are objective, clearing away the clutter of the irrelevant. The problems of human engineering, however, are inhibited by the prejudices, the feelings, the securities of very human individuals. Our concerns are circumscribed by our self-interest; our insights are thwarted by our possessions; our moral passion is inhibited by our material wants.

KING OF THE CASTLE

When we were boys we used to play a game called "King of the Castle." We would draw a circle on the ground for the castle and then struggle with might and main to see which one of us could hold the castle, stay in the circle, against all comers. In our times we have been playing king of the castle on a world scale. The divorce statistics suggest all too plainly that we have been playing the game in our homes and we have discovered that trying to be king at home is a profitless enterprise. We have been playing the game in industry, with business and labor the chief contenders for the castle. The races have been playing the game, trading blows with no quarter. The nations have been struggling to the death for the castle.

The game as we see it in the world is different from the game we used to play. Then, when the game was over, we all parted friends. Now, when the contestants part it is only an armed armistice. There is

name calling, nose thumbing and a vengeful toil to create new and more terrible weapons for a renewal of the struggle for the castle. Nobody wants to be nobody and everybody wants to be somebody. We all want to be kings by hook or crook and to possess the castle for ourselves. If somebody else possesses the castle, we bend our energies to the business of hauling him from his precarious perch.

Our reticence within the church to become involved in the struggle for power is understandable. Our reluctance to take sides or even to referee the struggle is indicative of our fear of being hurt. However, our timidity has paid off with disrepute so that now and then when we muster courage to speak with prophetic honesty we are treated with contempt or simply ignored. The struggle for power goes on undeterred by the church, whose "fire has gone out," whose courage has lost its cutting edge.

PROBLEM IS ONE OF SOVEREIGNTY

In our times the genius of science creating the means of our destruction has decisively ended our leisure for spiritual slumber and moral observation from the gallery. Nagasaki and Hiroshima are mute but terrible warning that our right to complacency in spiritual affairs has come to an end. The game of king of the castle has become too perilous to be played out in the arena of social and political affairs. Both the kings and the pretenders to their thrones are in danger of mutual self-destruction.

It is obvious that the resolution of our conflicts, of the struggle for power, is not to be found in our ordinary conferences and compromises. Arguments at home are never settled upon terms amicable to two persons who still retain kingly aspirations. Disputes in industry, even though compromised, usually result only in a tightening of the lines for the next encounter. Peace treaties leave the world in precarious balance because the warring parties are mostly concerned in jockeying for position. The problem is one of sovereignty, and there is no answer until there is a mutual passion for the sovereignty of God.

CHRIST IS CENTER

Robert Frost puts his finger on our basic need in his invitation

> . . . to a one-man revolution,
> The only revolution that is coming.

It is a revolution involving the dethronement of ourselves and the installation of a king worthy to be king. Paul put the matter aptly in his word to the Corinthians that "they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." The revolution involves repentance and a new center of reference for our thinking and our acting. The revolution, if it begins at all, will have its origin in the church of Christ.

"If a man be in Christ, he is a new creation." The phrase "in Christ" is Paul's way of describing life that revolves around Christ as its center. We are like the drive wheel of a locomotive wherein the power generated is contingent upon the distance of the drive shaft anchor from the wheel. So, our power to be instruments of God for the redemption of the world is dependent upon getting Christ at the center of life and ourselves at the circumference. Reinhold Niebuhr remarks pertinently that the self "must be possessed if it is to escape the prison of self-possession . . . for self-possession means self-centeredness." "One-man revolution," blasting the self from the center to the circumference of life, is the essence of repentance and new life.

We talk of enlisting one million new members for the Presbyterian Church. If that means merely enrolling another million self-centered individuals, I am not interested. If it means that a million self-possessed men and women and children are to join the church we shall merely clutter the church with more "dead timber." As it is now, the inertia of the church suggests that multitudes of our people just joined another club with no thought of inner revolution. But if we mean to enlist a million individuals intent upon recentering their lives, intent upon an inward revolution to depose the self and let Christ reign, then the church is on the road to redemptive power.

MAKING ROOM FOR GOD

The task of leading men and women to a repentant recentering of their lives is quite beyond our power until our own lives have found themselves in Christ. Self-surrender is not easy, we all know from personal experience in more ways than one. Henry Thoreau put the matter aptly when he remarked in a conversation with Ralph Waldo Emerson: "When a man is standing in his own way, everything gets in his way." Deeper yet, "when a man is standing in his own way," he is in God's way too. Back in 1794 when we in America were trying to settle our differences with England, John Jay was our special envoy. The English foreign minister was advised in a confidential report that "Mr. Jay's chief weakness is Mr. Jay." Mr. Jay was in Mr. Jay's way and in his country's way as well.

My problem, your problem, everybody's problem is that of getting ourselves out of the way so that God can use us. There can be no new life either in us or in the church until we get ourselves out of the way. "If a man be in Christ" he is off his own hands, out of his own way and God's. Jesus put the matter profoundly when he said: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD

Our ability to meet the staggering needs of the world, the hunger, the spiritual poverty, the moral depravity depends upon our ability to get ourselves out of the way in giving both ourselves and our possessions for the cause of Christ. Our capacity for daring, for risk, for adventure in dealing with the

struggle for power in the world around us is contingent upon the extent to which we lose our lives for Christ's sake. Our support for the missions of the church is emasculated not by our poverty, but by our selfishness. Our power to move and shake the dull world's soul is thwarted not by our incompetence but by our self-centeredness. But "if a man be in Christ, he is a new creation" with a new center and a new soul.

FREEDOM FROM SIN

New life, then, means a new center of reference for life generating freedom from "the little aims that end with self" and commitment to the "vaster issues" that lie beyond the horizons of the self. It alters the character of the king of the castle game so that we are intent upon keeping God on the throne where he belongs. It means freedom from the sins whose roots are in our selfishness, and is there any sin that does not have its source in self-possession? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Just watch a boy becoming new when his life is recentered by his first experience of being in love. Believe me, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Habitually tousled hair becomes both slick and redolent of hair tonic. Neck and ears, long unaccustomed to scrubbing except under protest, are meticulously scrubbed. Manners, long regarded as a nuisance to comfortable eating, become significant. Life centers in the insistent question: "What can I do to please Susie?" A transformation is wrought in the life of the boy not because he suddenly resolves of his own will to be different, but because the love of Susie constrains him.

NEWNESS OF LIFE

So Paul insists that we come to "newness of life" not by resolution, not by relentless will, not by stern determination, but rather when life finds a new focus in Christ and his love constrains us. He does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. His cross becomes a coercive symbol of his love, constraining an answering love. We begin to ask the insistent question: "What can I do to please my Lord?" and the answer comes: "Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, even these least, ye do it unto me."

Under the impact of life in Christ fellowship and community become possible. Prejudices pale because "the little aims that end with self" no longer fan them into flame. The game of king of the castle ceases to be the calling of gentlemen who seek instead "The Beloved Community." The "don't rock my boat" complex yields to a new venturesomeness resolved to "upset the world" in the name of justice and mercy. One-man revolution, multiplied by thousands and millions, becomes social and political revolution. "The Beloved Community" becomes not the vain dream of an impractical idealist, but rather the impossible *possible* of human experience.

Josiah Royce was convinced that "The Beloved Community" was possible, but he was aware that its coming always would be God's doing, not ours. He was certain that wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, with lives centered in him, there would be a power greater than themselves yielding wisdom wiser than their corporate minds; there would be insight, richer than their combined knowledge; there would be harmony and mutual understanding beyond the scope of human compromise. In homes, in industrial relations, in international affairs and in race relations "The Beloved Community" could be realized, but only on the basis of a prior "one-man revolution" multiplied by scores, and hundreds, and thousands and millions.

IT IS LATER THAN WE THINK

Let there be no mistake; our time is running out and already it is later than we think. We dare not sleep if we would save a shattered world, blundering toward a new abyss of agony and pain. This is God's hour and ours to be the instrument of a great redemption in Christ's name.

A Pastoral Prayer

By WARE W. WIMBERLY

ALMIGHTY GOD, our heavenly Father, grant us true humility before Thee. Give us minds willing to learn, hearts receptive to the gracious influences of Thy Spirit.

Break down the walls of our pride. Pass through the unopened doors of our selfish wills. Possess us and re-create us. Thus grant us the unity which comes of Thy Spirit dwelling within all our hearts, that we as one may seek Thy blessings, the mercies we need individually and in common.

Lay Thy hand upon our sick to heal them. Speak peace to minds that are confused. Bring Thy word to the sorrowful. Give Thy rest to the weary. Grant Thy radiant hope to the desperate. Inspire us all to believe in Thee and to love Thee. And hear our prayers for all individuals whom we name in our hearts before Thee.

Bless our community to Thy purposes. Bless our nation to the advancement of Thy Kingdom, granting Thy wisdom to the President of these United States and to all others who are in authority over us. Help us, as citizens, to keep true to the ideals of our fathers. Grant us a citizenship that is strong and loyal and sacrificial, delivering us from blind partisanship, from provincialism, from false patriotism. Give us a vision of a world united in the ways of peace.

Finally, O Lord, help us to rededicate ourselves in every way unto Thy service. Help us to rededicate our lives anew unto Him who is the Captain of our faith, the Savior of our souls, even Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we offer this prayer. Amen.

The Cup of Trembling

By WESNER FALLAW

Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling . . . thou shalt no more drink it again. Isaiah 51:22b.

BURIED in dim awareness where few dare give it recognition, is the expectation that we may shortly be the victims of global wreckage. So far as our present mental and social health is concerned, it matters little whether this expectation is to be fulfilled or not. Even if a conflict between Russia and the Western world never actually breaks out, we are a people as ill with guilt and fear as if we possessed positive knowledge that, because of our sins of greed and pride, destruction will presently take place.

And this is why we cannot be comforted. This is why we cannot hear the words of the Second Isaiah as he reassured the people of his day who had known desolation of war and captivity:

> Break forth into joy, sing together. . . .
> For the Lord hath comforted his people.

The "cup of trembling" is no mere title of a current play. Nor was Isaiah, from whom the dramatist borrowed the phrase, referring to intoxicating drink. Nothing so gentle! The cup of trembling is the fury of the Lord. To the ancient prophet there was not a doubt that calamity on a wholesale and national scale is visited upon a people precisely because the truth of God is ignored or profaned.

SUFFERING, REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS

Biblical teaching is utterly clear on this point: calamitous periods, the ordeal of war and captivity follow upon social evil, denial of God's justice and thwarting of his righteousness. It is equally clear, from the biblical account, that after suffering, through penitence, through a tortured cry to God for forgiveness and redemption, people and nations can enjoy God's own comfort, can have his ineffable peace. Why is it that today no one and no nation can hear Isaiah saying:

> Break forth into joy, sing together. . . .
> For the Lord hath comforted his people?

We need to see with a prophetic eye the social forces that, economically and politically qualified, even now are propelling the human race toward the abyss. Notice how nations, like individuals, when called to account, point toward the other fellow and loudly declaim: "His failure, his guilt, his sins, are greater than mine." As if to say: "I know I'm wrong, but just see how much worse the other fellow is."

The Russian government is bad. Tyranny proliferates. Were the human degradation suffered in Russia weighed in the same scales in which is weighed the human degradation suffered in America, possibly most of the world (including many people in Russia) would say that America is relatively just, compared to Russia with her ruthlessness. Put our racial discrimination, our economic exploitation alongside Russia's police state, with its slave camps, and we may confidently expect that any impartial court of the world would adjudge us ahead of Stalin's system. But Russia's greater sins in no way cancel what we are pleased to call America's lesser sins.

It is because we know so well our own failure to deal justly and mercifully and humbly with dissenting elements within our borders and without that we perceive our unreadiness to "break forth into joy, [and] sing together. . . ." For we are not comforted. How can we be, if we're honest?

WHAT OF AMERICA TODAY?

Can we honestly assert that business is aimed at human welfare, at home and elsewhere? Do not private and corporate gains come first, with human betterment a poor and incidental second? Does altruism or greed dominate our commerce? It is not a little thing to succumb to economic power interests. It is no matter of passing moment for us to subscribe blindly to the social, economic and political systems that have brought the human race to the shifting edge of disaster. However well the present system may have served us, it has not succeeded in stopping wars; it has not succeeded in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked.

To America much has been given. And to whom much is given, of him much is expected. We cannot excuse our economic responsibility with the quip, "How much is much?" We may short-wave to the world the huge figures on our shiploads of food and clothing sent to needy peoples. But we must know that something less than a pure motive put the Marshall plan into operation. Something less than altruism causes us to give goods and money to Europe and China. And though we do so at a cost to ourselves of further devaluation of the dollar, we are not actuated by generosity. And for this the cup of trembling will be our portion; for the fury of God, not the comfort of God, has all through history fallen upon men and nations who fatten themselves while their neighbors endure privation, starvation, disease, death.

Self-interest, whether stupid or enlightened, is still self-interest. Unless we are devoted to the welfare of all the people of earth, we have not come of age in

this global neighborhood. And we simply must live as neighbors concerned with the common good. We must, or economic failure will loose the fires of a new Mars, atomic-powered, to lay waste man's habitation.

OUR MODERN BABYLON

The next time you go to New York, look intently at the towers of Manhattan. Estimate, if you can, the number of bricks and stones embedded in those structures. Contemplating the destiny of civilization, Professor Richard Niebuhr has said that he is reminded of Jesus' statement over Jerusalem that "not one stone will be left upon another." Is it possible that Manhattan, the Kingdom of Mammon, where centers the wealth of the world, will be leveled, with not one stone resting upon another? And look into the faces of the passing New York millions—about the number that were executed or burned in the gas chambers of Germany; look and gasp again to recall that the nazi policy could be conceived and carried out in a world so fair, in a civilization so advanced as ours.

The makers and preservers of a selfish economy have no intention of bringing on a war—one that will stem from misery and fear—a war that will burn more millions than German gas chambers ever consumed. But without the *intention* the *result* can be the same. A policy devoted to buying up the oil reserves of the Middle East to feed our warplanes, instead of making that oil available for tractors to till the land to feed Europe and Asia, is a policy which at the least is contributory to the coming destruction. So long as it remains a remote possibility that economic greed, even though induced by political "necessity" and skepticism about the peaceful motives of Russia, will bring on the final conflict, just so long are we obligated to align our thought, our influence, our vote with men who take seriously the ideal of economic democracy. Justice requires this. Love of fellow man, as taught by Christ, requires it.

Pride, greed's twin, stands between us and implementation of Christ's injunction that whatsoever things we would have others do to us, we must first do to them. And because our world of nation states is shackled with selfishness and pride, the song of Isaiah is but a dissonance to the ear:

> Break forth into joy, sing together. . . .
> For the Lord hath comforted his people.

TODAY'S INTERNATIONAL DEBACLE

We are in the midst of a strange new era in international relations. Erstwhile enemies we court as friends. Recent allies we berate as enemies in a cold war, hot with verbiage. A compound of suspicion and pride prevents American and Russian chiefs of state from appealing to each other for a conference aimed at radical revision of the present fateful conditions moving the nations toward possible doom. Soviet propagandists distort the truth about America and American publicists vilify the Soviet Union. Russians are exhorted to hate America; Americans are urged to prepare for a holy war against atheistic Russia. In this, the seedtime of the year, the earth yet remains. But by autumn's harvest, who can say whether the reaping of the fruitage of the seed of hatred will not demolish the earth?

Our government apparently operates on the belief that as we arm ourselves even more heavily, we can frighten Russia into peaceful relations—and there will be no war. If this policy succeeds, a unique page will have been added to history. Hitherto, when major powers have armed, war has followed. Hitherto, armed might, not charity, has been the final arbiter between nations. But now international charitableness is essential to our salvation. And charity is lacking.

He that taketh a sword shall perish by the sword. America has burning within her soul the fires of guilt—the guilt of loosing the death ray of atomic power. Offspring of this guilt-agony is her present fear—fear close to panic. It is for this that America suffers. Likewise, Russia suffers from her guilt—guilt because of broken pledges and deliberate lies. From neither government arises any man to make confession. That *would* be a novelty in this time of international novelties! From neither side in the controversy stands forth any responsible leader to plead for forgiveness for his nation. For this it is that national pride may be expected to bring desolation and destruction and famine and sword.

COMFORT WILL COME—BUT NOT YET

Isaiah's figure—the cup of trembling—is before us, heavy with the dregs of the fury of the Lord. Upon his people this punishment will fall. Who are God's people? All men, even Russians. All will experience the fury of righteousness violated, and then, eventually,

> Break forth into joy, sing together. . . .
> For the Lord hath comforted his people.

But not yet!

How short a time ago there was hope that the cup of trembling would serve to establish the Four Freedoms of the Atlantic Charter! But—incredibly—the world has not yet suffered enough to repent, to abolish armaments and abandon libel; the world has not yet suffered enough to suppress greed and stifle pride. Wherefore the prospect of a fall. In this fall the record of history will write larger than ever the deposal of tyrants, the obliteration of armies that today strut on parade and tomorrow lie still in grotesque mounds of rotting flesh.

Hear, now, the vision of one who beheld the folly of a nation that would darken the sun with masses of fighters and bombers. This man heeded the biblical warning: "Woe to them that put their trust in chariots and horses."

And woe unto them that put their trust in planes that would crowd birds and stars from the sky. Woe to them, for the ground whereon they stand—while

their youth take wing with bullets and nurse their bombs above the clouds—the ground shall be convulsed with these falling planes.

The conflict had come. Earth and heaven were shut away, each from the other, a wedge of planes between. To the watchers it seemed that the land was secure. Promise held of victory—but abruptly, a promise shattered. Suddenly, simultaneously every wing was ripped from every plane and the whole mass fell like gigantic plummets, disintegrating and spewing fire and smoke. And the fall disemboweled the earth. And afterwards, there was a great stillness.

The time is not yet when God can say to us:

> I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling . . . thou shalt no more drink it again.

THIS YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1948

Like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying that if it were possible he be spared the agony of the cross, we pray that the cup be taken from us ere we taste its bitters. But it seems unlikely that we and the Russians shall be spared. The people of the world are split asunder, suffering in their gardens, alone in this springtime, year of our Lord 1948—this springtime that despite a verdant earth is as a barren winter of the soul. It is as if tree and flower had withered in bud and the light of the sun had been blotted forever from sight. It is as though the mind of man were permanently numbed, the last hope blighted, his spirit quenched, his bodily being left in shuddering solitariness.

"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from us." But the prayer freezes in the heart before it can pass to the lips. For we know that men and nations do not choose to meet the conditions for reaching a peaceful solution to their quarrels. Neither Russia nor America has been willing to abandon the veto that has already wrecked the United Nations. Neither Russia nor America either knows how or would be willing to seek reconciliation in gentleness and humility. If Russia won't establish political democracy, neither will America establish economic democracy.

GOD WILL YET HAVE HIS DAY

But evil will not permanently win. This is God's world. And God, being righteous, will see justice done among men. Arrogant nations, fearful individuals, drunk with greed and pride cannot stay the eventual day when the heavens shall sing, and the earth be joyful, when the mountains shall break forth into singing of God's merciful comfort for all sorrowing ones of earth. This was Isaiah's prophecy for the people of his land who endured war and desolation. And this is God's comfort for all people in all times:

> I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling . . . thou shalt no more drink it again.

The cup of the fury of the Lord is a fury engendered by man's injustice to man, man's personal and national selfishness and arrogance. Before this fury is assuaged the world may be racked by more sorrow and anguish than has ever ascended to heaven. Now man has his day, and corrupts it beyond human reclamation. But God will have his day. But the day of the Lord is darkness, not light. Now it is that scientists, statesmen, prophets, theologians, preachers, teachers and any one with a modicum of discernment that this is a cause-effect universe, all unite to glimpse the reality and imminence of hell. He who knows nothing of hell, who cannot imagine its dimensions, is scarcely enlightened.

We seem to be at a moment in human history when it is too late to cry: "Turn back, O man, forswear thy foolish ways."

Be that as it may, it is for us to face the issue with awe, not fear. It is for us to ponder the truth of man's being a citizen of eternity as well as a creature of time. It is for every person of faith to perceive that though far more of earth is ephemeral than has been supposed, the spirit of man endures forever. It is for us to labor at our tasks as if the salvation of man and the redemption of society rests upon us, yet knowing they do not. It is for us to perceive that though our saving work fail, God will ultimately redeem us.

> I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling . . . thou shalt no more drink it again, saith our God.

In this confidence we live, and work the works of God while it is yet day.

Christian Humility

CHRISTIANS, of all people, must repent of their sins both individual and collective; Christians must learn to avoid the errors of the past. A case in point is the burning of the Spanish mystic, Michael Servetus, by the Calvinists of Geneva in 1553. Condemning this man to death for his religious views was in conflict with the whole genius of the Reformation as a movement for spiritual liberty. Thus it is impressive to note that nearly 350 years later, in 1901, the Calvinists of Geneva erected an expiatory monument to Servetus on which they inscribed these words: "The respectful and grateful sons of Calvin, our great Reformer, condemning an error which was that of his time, and firmly attaching themselves to the liberty of conscience according to the true principles of the Reformation and the gospel, have raised this expiatory monument."

DON E. SMUCKER.

ALL sound relationships are based on character and faith. It is the investment of ourselves in terms of faith in God, in the future and in the fighting chance to build the Kingdom that gives to our character the strength and power and motivation to solve our overwhelming problems.

E. STANLEY JONES.

The Conquest of Doubt

By K. MORGAN EDWARDS

Except I shall see . . . I will not believe. John 20:25.

FOR TEN YEARS after Henry Hallam died, Alfred Tennyson wrote no poetry at all. Sixteen years later, after working his way through the darkness of doubt occasioned by the death of his friend, he dared to say in his "In Memoriam":

> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds.

Is it possible that there are times when doubt leads to faith? Whether it does or not, it is certain that this is a doubting era. Honest religion does not call doubt a felony, but an illness, a reflection of the disease of our culture. Religion that does not realize how convincing the sense of life's futility can be will not match man's need. The stern aspects of our existence demand great faith. As Tennyson discovered in the dark and tragic experience of his sorrow over the loss of his friend, doubt is the dark background against which faith's light really shines. Despair is framed for mankind's great hope.

THE PREVALENCE OF DOUBT

It is not fair to point to others in our day as skeptics, for the faults and the perils of this age of skepticism are common to us all. Doubt has left its mark on everyone. Like F. D. Maurice we must "confess the sins of our times as our own."

The Gospel gives us several portraits of doubters, one of them a disciple of Jesus. The greatest lesson of comfort ever taught was interrupted by the skeptic's question. Jesus was telling his disciples that a place was prepared for his Father's children. "If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." The others were captured by the poetry of it. Thomas was not. He protested: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" There was no making assumptions with Thomas. No blind acceptance would satisfy him. Patiently the Master answers: "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Yet, lacking vision, Thomas was still willing to venture. When Jesus faced the necessity of a trip to Bethany, the journey afforded a perfect opportunity for his enemies to ambush him. Thomas was quite clear about the danger, yet he did not lack courage. "Let us go also, that we may die with him." Stubborn doubter that he was, Thomas the stable follower would lead the way under the threat of death.

After the resurrection the other disciples were carried off on the wings of faith, but earth-bound Thomas refused to believe. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe," he declared. Long on examination, Thomas was still short on conjecture.

It was no accident that, with only twelve choices to make, the Master deliberately chose Thomas as a disciple. Jesus wanted candor of mind. Smart skepticism, which would have been disappointed with truth's discovery, the Master did not seek. He wanted a man who would not "make his judgment blind." In this respect, we are all more like Thomas than we would care to admit.

CAUSES OF OUR DOUBT

There are many causes which lead men to become Knights Errant of Doubting Castle. Bewilderment results from the knowledge that our universe is great. The distance of the stars, the sweep of the forces which drive our little earth like a grain of sand in a storm, add to our sense of insignificance and futility. Our sun, a million times larger than the speck of dirt on which we live, is but a dwarf among a possible two hundred million suns in our particular galaxy. Spencer Jones, astronomer royal of England, estimated that a telescope like the one on Mount Wilson might disclose seventy-five million such galaxies or universes as ours.

Some people are like the lad described by Sam Walter Foss:

> And as his universe grew great,
> He dreamed for it a greater God.

But with most of us our tiny faith shrinks to infinitesimal proportions in the face of such magnitude. Expansive knowledge overwhelms and stuns our little belief. Yet the first-rate scientists do not disallow the presence of mystery. Jeans and Compton are witnesses to the fact that one need not doubt even if one plumbs the deep mysteries of the universe.

RESULT OF LOST CONSCIENCE

If some of our doubt is the result of increased factual knowledge, skepticism is also the result of a lost conscience. The disillusionment of our age has led us to grow slack in our conduct. Lax conduct has led to greater doubt. I have known many people who were unwilling to send their children away to college because they feared that the uncovering of scientific knowledge would destroy their faith. More college

students lose their faith by declining morals than through scientific discoveries.

If doubt is the measure of our own lack of character, it is more frequently occasioned because we question the character of God. Hear the appeal of Countee Cullen, Negro poet:

> I doubt not God is good, well-meaning, kind . . .
> Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
> To make a poet black and bid him sing!

The riddle of the universe leaves us puzzled. An honest man is despoiled and slain. A child is damned into an existence without eyes. A woman who sells her honor for gold flourishes while virtue starves to death in over half the world. God's rain falls on the unjust while truth dies on stony ground. Men strike down their brothers and the iron mace still rules the world. History is punctuated with a great question mark.

WHEN DOUBT PRODUCES FAITH

Doubt is frequently the result of careful observation of the visible factors in the unfolding process of history.

Doubt may be nearer to great faith than blind acceptance. We all begin as children, with a blind, naive acceptance. We move on to the second stage when we open our eyes and see some of the terrible forces in the universe. Such make us question the goodness of God, and doubt is the result. The danger of doubt is not for any man who experiences it. Its peril is for that man who does not pass through it at all. Tennyson understood that and knocking upon a door that would not open he dared to say:

> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds.

Yet we cannot stop with doubt. If our world with all the terrible evidences of diabolical forces is the best we can hope for, then of all God's creatures we are the most miserable. Religious vision is our one ground of hope. Take it from man, and human life is but a glimpse of occasional delight lighting up the dark background of terror and suffering.

DOUBT'S BLUNDERS

Society's blunders, man's inhumanity to man, the heartlessness of a machine-dominated culture, a war to end wars which merely preludes a greater conflict —all these are intolerable unless there be some hope. If doubt is the ultimate resource of our spiritual and cultural leaders, then "the blind lead the blind" and we shall fall into a ditch.

Where then can a Christian find the means to conquest of doubt? Experience points to duty as man's way out of doubt's darkness. The path of duty is clear. He who walks in the way of Christian duty will find faith at last.

F. W. H. Myers, great mystic, tells of walking with George Eliot at Cambridge. George Eliot took as her text "the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-calls of men—the words God, Immortality, Duty." The first was "inconceivable," the second "unbelievable," but the third "peremptory and absolute." Often in moments of doubt all that is clear to us is our duty to humanity and the world. Yet we can walk into the fray and quit ourselves like men, trusting where we cannot know.

Robertson of Brighton describes the transition from blind faith to his own hour of doubting: "It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to doubt whether there is anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning, and seems shriveled into a span; when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name, and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God himself has disappeared. . . . I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scatheless; it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand, simple landmarks of morality. . . . If there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed . . . is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. . . . Thrice blessed, because his night shall pass into clear bright day."

Night did pass into day for Robertson and he became greatest of the English preachers and interpreters of the spirit of Christ.

WHEN LIFE TAKES ON NEW MEANING

Let's go along with Tennyson one more step:

> Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
> At last he beat his music out.

John Bright left the funeral of his wife a broken man. Richard Cobden laid upon the widower's heart the burden of England's poor, and through his duty to the people of his country Bright recaptured his faith. His shattered life took on new meaning.

Thomas was a disciple destined to begin his pilgrimage without wings. Thomas had no intuitive moments. When following Jesus required glowing faith the Master never turned to Thomas. For three long years Jesus watched the struggle inside Thomas. The disciple's heart and his head pulled in opposite directions. He loved the Master with an unswerving loyalty, but he could not always understand the strange sayings of the Galilean.

One day the Master got a new insight into Thomas' devotion. To go through Judea to Bethany in order to attend the funeral of Lazarus seemed sheer folly. The disciples saw this as a wild and ruthless risk. Thomas was quite aware of the danger. It was not

the insight of faith that rallied the disciples, but the call of duty. And Thomas understood that better than the others. "Let us also go, that we may die with him." No faith was his, but heroic loyalty he had in full measure.

FINAL VICTORY FOR THE DOUBTER

When the final chapter was written in the earthly life of Christ no disciple was as completely crushed as Thomas. The others had small measure of faith to go on. They could live by the dreams they had once entertained. To the matter-of-fact realism of Thomas, Jesus was dead. His Master had failed. He had no hope, only marvelous memory for his comfort. He could not bring himself to meet with the disciples in the upper room. It was all over. When they returned from meeting they tried to cheer him up with the statement that the Jesus whom they believed dead had appeared to them. In violent protest the man of doubt insisted that he would not be comforted by delusive hopes. Unless he could see and feel the very marks of Calvary themselves, he would not believe.

As Thomas was seated in the upper room with the disciples, Jesus again appeared. The doubter sat in awed silence. He could not believe what he saw. Jesus offered to submit to the test which Thomas had insisted he would require.

Up to this moment Thomas had been walking the path of duty. Faith had persisted in the disciples; love had persisted in Thomas. The others could be praised for believing where they could not see. Thomas must be praised for walking the path of obligation when he could not know the outcome. And to every pilgrim who walks in the steps of the Master faith comes at last.

Thomas' moment had come. Only the three intimate disciples had shared the Mount before. Now Thomas had his mountaintop experience. He did not have to reach forth his hand. His faith had at last caught up with his heart. In a great burst of insight which secured his faith for the rest of his days and for the eternities he cried, "My Lord, and my God."

Looking on the Good Side

A Sermon for Juniors by CARL S. WEIST

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. Psalm 42:5.

THE PSALMIST was evidently having a pretty hard time of it when he wrote these lines. He was cast down, disquieted, grumpy (just as we are sometimes before breakfast); nothing was right. He had probably received a poor mark in school; his parents had called him to account for throwing his clothes around carelessly; he had been told that he could not go to see a movie every week, there wasn't money for it; besides he had to practice on the piano, if ever he was to become a musician. But let's see, I set out to talk about the psalmist way back there two thousand years ago, didn't I? Well, the psalmist was having a distressing time.

WISE ROBINSON CRUSOE!

What did he do? He began to think about the good side of his life. He stopped centering his mind on what was wrong and gave his attention to what was right. "Hope thou in God," he cried. "Never mind what happens to you; if you have God, nothing can harm you. I praise God, for he is the help of my countenance."

That was a pretty good way to take care of a situation, wasn't it? That is, when you begin to get the blues, put your mind on what you have that is good.

That was what Robinson Crusoe did. He is the man in the story whose ship was wrecked somewhere down in the Southern seas, and all were drowned except himself. The waves finally rolled him up on a beach of a little island, you remember. That was pretty bad to be all alone with no clothes, no food, no one to talk to, and with a good chance of staying there the rest of his life. I don't know what you would do, or what I would have done, but this is what Crusoe did: he sat down and wrote two columns. On the left he scribbled a list of things that were not good, on the right the things that were good.

NOT GOOD

(a) Cast upon a desolate island. (b) No human company. (c) No food in sight. (d) No clothes. (e) No defense; that is, no gun or other weapon.

GOOD

(a) Still alive, not drowned as the rest of the ship's company were. (b) A footprint in the sand—which meant that someone might be there. (c) Not starving. (d) Hot climate. (e) No wild beasts such as he had seen on the coast of Africa.

When he had everything set down, he found that he was pretty well off, after all. He had a lot to be thankful for, so with cheer in his mind and a deal of courage he set out to make his life on the lone island a happy adventure.

WHY NOT TRY CRUSOE'S PLAN?

You and I can do that, too. There is so much to be thankful for that we should never be unhappy, sad or grumpy. Your list might run like this:

Not Good

(a) No money to buy a boat. (b) No car to take me to school. (c) Deep snow. (d) Failed in a subject in school. (e) Need a new coat. (f) Discouraged about my future.

Good

(a) Can build my own boat. (b) Walking to school and enjoying it. Better health. (c) Decided that a heap of snow or rain would not control my life. Good coasting. (d) Learned to study harder. (e) Have parents who love me, a home and sufficient clothes to wear. (f) God is my hope. If I stay close to God and do the best I can, all will be well.

Try it out this week, won't you? Every time you are not so happy about things, think about Robinson Crusoe suddenly thrust upon an island with all the past blotted out and no future to speak of. Think of the psalmist whose tears, as he says, were his meat day and night. Both sat down and wrote out columns of the good things God had given them. If you have God in that column, as the psalmist says, you really don't need much else; for near the close of the forty-second psalm, the author says: "The Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me." Kindness in the daytime, a song in the darkness of the night.

That is what you have, when you look on the good side of life. Hope thou in God!

Prayer

By KING D. BEACH

O GOD, we cannot ponder Thy universe in the sky or in the atom without knowing that Thou art truly the God of glory. We only guess at Thy greatness of mind, at Thy creative imagination and power, using our fantastically stretched numbers to suggest to us the infinities and the infinitesimals of Thy creation. We are lost in wonder, love and praise.

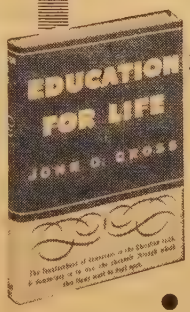
We worship Thee not merely as the God of glory, else we would know that Thou wouldst never hear our small voices. Thou art also the God of grace, the God who offers us Thy favor, offers it to us even when we are weak, willful and sinful. Thou art the God who, coming to us in Christ Jesus, fills out our realization of Thee, revealing that Thou art our Father, loving us, forgiving us, guiding us, daring to call us to share Thy friendship and Thy purpose.

Sometimes our dull spiritual senses are strangely quickened. Sometimes a light surprises us, and Thou dost find a way into our innermost being. May this morning be such a time. Find Thine own way, O Thou seeking Shepherd, into every mind, in the sacred quiet and quest of this moment, when every thought turns toward Thee. Find Thy way to us making us weary of all that is ugly and low, causing us to revolt from all that is untrue to Thee, filling us with love for Thee and for our fellow men. Forgive us for the madness of war and bring peace, first in our hearts and then in the world. Amen.

Just Published

THE CREATOR AND THE ADVERSARY

● *by* **EDWIN LEWIS.** Can the God of love declared in Jesus Christ be regarded as also the God who maintains creation and who is active in history, unless we suppose that he is everywhere faced with a malignant Adversary? Dr. Lewis presents a deep-searching reconsideration of the idea of God underlying the conflict of good and evil. The subject matter is thought-provoking; the treatment is clear and compelling. Dr. Lewis, professor of systematic theology and philosophy of religion at Drew University, has written extensively in the biblical and theological fields. **$3**



EDUCATION FOR LIFE

● *by* **JOHN O. GROSS.** In this volume education is conceived as much more than the formal work done in schools. It is as wide as life, and its influences are as far-reaching as life itself. The author points out the part education has had in producing our American democracy and culture, and the importance in the future of this nation's education being Christian. John O. Gross, secretary of the Department of Educational Institutions of the Board of Education of The Methodist Church, has been a leader in this field for many years. Pastors, church-school workers, and others interested in the broad phases of our educational program will find this book extremely helpful. **$2.25**

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ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS

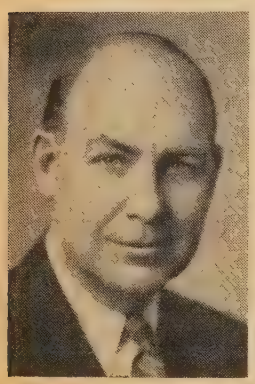
'In the Breaking of Bread'

A Communion Sermon

By MILLARD M. GIFFORD

Then they related what had happened on the way, and how he had been recognized by them in the breaking of bread. Luke 24:35 (Weymouth).

A NEW and sparkling insight concerning the Holy Communion was brought to me recently as I was reading *On Being Immortal,* by Abbie Graham. Listen to her words of wisdom: "God lives not, I think, in bread and wine, but in the breaking of bread, in the sharing of wine. Bread unbroken does not fortify the heart, but bread divided among all who hunger will sustain the spirit."



This is true, not only of God, but of Christ as well. Consider for just a moment the travelers on the road to Emmaus. If I could have written any part of the New Testament, this is the story I would have contributed. The men are sad. Jesus has been crucified, their hunger for understanding must forever go unsatisfied. But a Friend draws near. A friendly voice inquires: "What manners of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?" The men are pleased by this stranger and his friendliness, but they are still suffering, they need sympathy desperately. And it came! Can you not hear it in these poignant words: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" A marvelous Companion was he! But "the best was yet to be." For, acting as Host, appreciating their warm response to his overtures, "he took bread and blessed it and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew him." And they remarked: "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked to us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

SHARING IS THE KEY

They had been physically hungry, but even more hungry in spirit. Christ, by sharing his friendship, his sympathy and his love, made them realize that bread and wine in themselves are of no value. It is only bread which is broken and wine which is shared that fortifies the heart and sustains the spirit. That is to say—it is not so much what we give as what we share. It is not the amount, but the degree of sacrifice. It is not the time spent for others, but the intensity with which we labor that really counts. The "breaking of bread" emphasizes again that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

After World War I, Albert Schweitzer, who had been a prisoner of war, was invited by Archbishop Soderblom of Norway to recuperate in his home. Schweitzer was discouraged and sick. His work at Lambarene in Africa had come to a standstill. The buildings he had erected at such sacrifice had become the prey of jungle insects and weather. The archbishop took such a lively interest in him that Schweitzer began to get well. So it is at the Lord's Table. No matter how friendless we may feel, we begin to get well as we absorb the friendship of our Host.

Dr. Schweitzer relates how, when a child, and had been playing in the parsonage garden, he was stung by a bee. He began to howl, was cared for at once with genuine sympathy, and found it so heartwarming that he cried the rest of the afternoon. Later, as a mature man, having experienced a severe operation, he began to think much of "the fellowship of those who bear the mark of pain." All of us belong to this fellowship, but it seems very strange that Jesus Christ can share with us as we suffer the agony of pain, the heartache of sin, and inner tensions. And yet he is able to do just that, not because he has sinned, nor because he has thought wrongly, but just because his humanity can understand every difficulty. There is no trial he is ignorant of, no burden he has not borne, no sorrow he has not experienced. The Holy Table reminds us of this too—that in Christ we have one who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and who shares our sorrows.

HOW GOD SHARES HIS LOVE

If friendship and sympathy are sustenance to the spirit, even more is love. William Law once declared: "All the doctrines, sacraments, institutions of the gospel are only so many explications of the meaning and applications of the benefit of this great mystery." He was thinking, of course, of the Atonement, the supreme example of God's love. Who can think of creation without remembering that we exist because God shared his spirit? Who can think of salvation and not be grateful that God has shared his love? Who can think of eternal life and not be thrilled that God has shared his power? Love loses its life in order to gain it. It gives itself away, seeking no return. Love always counts the cost, and having measured it, gives itself away in candle-burning ecstacy.

This thought of Abbie Graham's is truly Protestant in conception. No member of our church believes that he is partaking today of the actual body and real blood of his Lord. Life in the spiritual sense is derived, not from the physical bread and wine, but from the sharing, of which they are magnificent

symbols. The beauty of this conviction is that Communion becomes no isolated service occurring occasionally in the church year, but an experience capable of daily enactment by every person.

In a conversation with Alice Ehlers, a harpsichordist, Albert Schweitzer once remarked: "Always listen to the inner voices of Bach's music. Each voice lives its own life, dependently and independently at the same time. If you will look at Bach's music that way, letting each voice sing out its own beauty, I am sure you cannot fail." This is a splendid description of what transpires in our Communion service. Here is man, independent of Christ from one point of view but hopelessly dependent from another. And here is Christ, independent of man, dwelling not in temples made by human hands and yet dependent upon man for the carrying out of his purposes. He is listening for our strain of melody. And we must listen to his. What music we can make together!

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMMUNION SERVICE

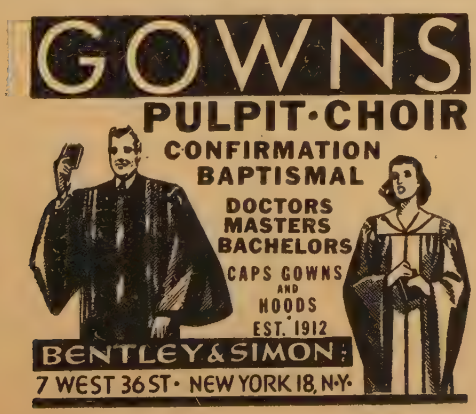
Christ was best known in the breaking of bread. And it is thus that we are best known. Any critical observer will agree that one loving deed is more than a thousand words. "What we are shouts so loudly that people cannot hear what we say."

Recognizing our deep need, we come to Christ's Table to have our hearts strengthened, to obtain spiritual renewal by accepting our Host's friendship, sympathy and love. And when the banquet is over we will go forth in faith and gladness to "break bread" with our fellows.

A Time for Boldness

Let us be bold. You have to be bold in order to say, "Thy Kingdom come on earth." Only a Christian nation, a nation of men and women "born from within," can achieve social rebirth. No change imposed from without, by totalitarian methods, can produce more than temporary travesty of our ideals. But unless rebirth coming from within reach out to social control as well as personal conduct, civilization is doomed.

Vida D. Scudder.



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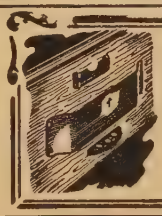
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Teaching Religion Through Worship

By WESLEY M. WESTERBERG

How shall we teach religion? "I got mine," writes George B. Gilbert in *Forty Years a Country Preacher*, "sitting quietly in the pew and listening to the voice of my mother, which rang with sincerity and devotion. It seems to me even now that I can hear her responding to the litany."

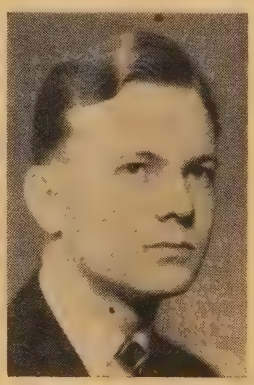
This may not be totally in accord with some of our popular theories and practices of religious education. From the perspective of religious educationalists the family pew is a cruel injustice to the child's endurance and span of attention. They consider it to be least of all a sound instrument of pedagogy. In its place they have substituted a highly departmentalized program, educational wings, and "worship services" on the level of the age-group. Within this framework worship is at best a tooth in the educational gear. The sanctuary is a side room which can wait for construction until the educational plant has been recovered from debt.

● *Worship an Encounter With Reality*

Now we are beginning to recognize that long before the educational church was plotted and drawn to scale, the Christian church for centuries had been teaching religion effectively through worship. It did this without deliberately intending to use worship as a teaching device. The church believed that the goal to be achieved was not a highly enlightened individual conversant with social issues, but a worshiping church. Moreover, it was worship *in church* through which most of its teaching unconsciously took place. The sanctuary was the scene of the church's life; here was its center. Here the whole church family met for the highest act of the Christian life: the adoration of God.

Recognizing this fact leads us to recover the view of worship as the end of our whole educational process and of our social action as well. Worship can be educative and worship can be social, but it is neither unless we acknowledge first that it is an encounter with Reality. Therefore we do not begin by calculating its value; to it we do not attribute any "function." We are not out to gain instruction about God; we are standing in the presence of God.

With this distinction in mind, however, we can go on to declare that worship is means as well as end. This will not permit us to use it principally as a device, but if we plan the details of worship with care and improve upon what we are already doing, it can demonstrate its educational value for us without losing its spiritual reality. For many who, like myself, were forced by the nature of the parsonage situation to give faithful attendance upon the Sunday school as well as the church service, there is no question as to where the learning process was most greatly abetted. In church — meaning "the big service"—we who were distinctly in the minority from Sunday to Sunday not only learned to recognize the intellectual foundations on which our faith rests, but *we learned to worship*. We found ourselves becoming at home in the house of God. It is not likely that the basic ideas of the Christian faith will seem even intellectually defensible through the discussion in the departmental classroom until they radiate out from the experience of worship in the church.



W. M. WESTERBERG

At a time when American Protestantism is suffering from a severe case of neglect in regard to the things we regard as essential, it is necessary once again to restore worship to the center of the church's life that it may profitably teach as well as inspire.

● *Worship Is Purposive*

There are several things implicit in worship that give it educational value. One is that worship is purposive. Every ordered movement in the service—the act of praise and the general confession, the offertory and the blessing of the congregation at the close—has a larger meaning than the act itself. Every gesture by the minister can have meaning. A mother may ask: "Why did you put your hand into the water three times when you baptized our baby?" To the parents, there must be a reason for it! This will be true whether or not the minister intends anything by his behavior, for slovenliness has its theological implications just as attention to form and pattern does. The worshiper himself, joining in the chorus of song, responding to the litany, speaking the creed, hearing the gospel read, is placed within the context of the great Christian truths.

Especially is this true in the service of Holy Communion, where he cannot escape the distinctively Christian ideas of holiness, grace and forgiveness, incarnation, sacrifice, and fellowship which there come to life. When he presents his child to the church, he cannot help wondering whether the service is merely a parochial practice or leads to a larger implication such as the one stated by a Swedish theologian: "Before man himself has made any effort to seek God, God has already in his prevenient grace received him into fellowship." Many people emerge from church as though from a holy fog, still bewildered as to what it was all about. But if the service was ordered and if the worshipers are given to wondering and reflection, every act will have led to meaning.

● *Worship Is Action and Is Social*

Worship also teaches through action. Worship *is* action, not a state of repose at the other end of the pendulum. When we participate in it, offering up ourselves as a sacrifice "worthy and acceptable," we learn to know and to love our faith. That all the implications of the creed, the gestures of the minister, the logic of each mood are not understood at first should not cause us undue concern. It is at this point that the educational program of the church can take over, describing the action that takes place in the service and developing mastery in the art of worship.

Worship, however carefully introduced into the curriculum of the church school, remains a mystery forever until men, women and children have worshiped in church and sensed the spiritual actuality that is present. First let us worship, then let us explain.

Worship is social—by nature. Without being told, the worshiper knows that Christianity is not a way of private holiness. He has found his place in the worshiping community, the family of God. Here his life is linked not only

with those around him but with generations of saints and common witnesses who have entrusted to him, at the price of their own sacrifice and struggle, a sacred heritage of faith. He may possess it in his own way, restate it in his own terms, but he will acknowledge that God has said more to his whole church than he would ever be able to reveal to him as a lone individual.

● *How Children Learn Meaning of Worship*

From these observations we can see the wisdom of steps now being taken by historically non-liturgical churches to make worship even in relation to the teaching character of the church. For one thing, the increased emphasis on the whole family worshiping together in church is merely a belated recognition that most of our habits and attitudes are learned from observing our elders. If the child is ever to learn the art of worship, he will learn it by imitating his parents. If he is ever to experience the sense of belonging, it will be in the company of those on whom he depends. Albert Schweitzer as a boy was deeply moved at the sight of his parents reverently engaged in the act of communion. Not able to understand much that was being said, his heart nevertheless did respond to God's revelation of himself in the breaking of bread.

Because there is this power of suggestion in the worship of children with their elders, there are those who insist that the child, while he is in church, be given the chance to watch his parents as they bow their heads in prayer, or to hear them respond to the litany. If the "unified" service of church and church school does not permit the children to be seated with their fathers and mothers, let them sit in the back pews where they may observe and imitate, not in the front pews where they will only be observed. At all costs, let them be in church as often as possible. Where older youth are concerned, the goal of the program must be to make worship of the church a worth while reality. If given responsibility for it they will eagerly claim it as their own. The young people to whom we did not hesitate to entrust a twin-engine bomber ought at least to be considered capable of "taking up the collection."

● *The Church Year*

The growing use of the Christian year as the setting for worship is bringing to many churches a much needed curriculum. Just as the church service corresponds to the movements of the soul in its encounter with God, the Christian year becomes a constantly new historical experience in which the divine drama of redemption is relived. Because it is an ordered cycle of worship, complete in all its parts, it has a unique educative function to perform in our day, when the theological roots of our faith are struggling to take hold in the subsoil of the lay mind and the clippings of the week have failed to provide the minister with the word of truth for his people.

The themes of the Christian year have to do with God as creator, his revelation in Christ, sin and forgiveness, the Holy Spirit and the church, the world and things to come. A minister need not confine himself to these, but he ought to feel that it is his privilege to begin with them. How effectively he may present the whole scope of the gospel if guided by the liturgical calendar in his preaching, the church's ceremonial, music and the reading of the Bible!

● *Significance of Symbols*

Symbols were the Christian's first articles of faith. Before the masses could read, the walls of the churches became the Bible of the poor. We may be literate in the sense that the printed page does not present a mystery, but compared to the Christians of an earlier day we do not understand the language which the church speaks. Still to us, as to the ancients, symbols can by their power of suggestion speak a vivid language and start our thinking in the direction of the ideas which they represent. In any church, however simple its design, some symbolism is lying dormant that can convey a wealth of meaning to those who regard their church with tenderness. Once it is explained it will speak for itself Sunday after Sunday with increasing effectiveness as the people meet to worship God.

Through symbols we confront our faith, and a congregation that is not afraid to *see* the gospel with their eyes as well as hear it with their ears might learn to say with Abbie Graham: "As I watch the Christmas candles burn I see in them a symbol of the Great Love which dipped a lustrous spirit into a human form that the world in its darkness might be illumined and made beautiful."

● *Worship and the Common Life*

Finally, the whole content of worship can become instructive as it is made relevant to life. The litany, the hymns and the prayers, as well as the sermon, may all concern themselves with the common life of the community, so that our concern for society not only begins in worship but returns to it. "In the church service," writes Hebert in *Liturgy and Society*, "we make use of the common things of daily life: . . . we use bread and wine, we eat and drink before God; we read aloud, we sing in chorus, we perform ordered movements, we light candles . . . all these things are done in church in order to signify that the corresponding actions in daily life are redeemed to God."

When the common life is thus woven into our worship our people will not be surprised to hear that we can never go out from the presence of God. The service we presumably go out to give to men is constantly offered again upon the altar as a service to God.

Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

Vitality of the Church

A number of years ago it became necessary to cut down one of the giant redwood trees of California. The tree was estimated to be over 1,500 years old and when worked up into lumber it was discovered that the giant had passed through at least three great crises during its fifteen centuries of living. Three times forest fires had smitten the tree and each time hundreds of square feet of charred surface were left on one side or another. But in spite of the ravages of the scorching blaze, the vitality of the tree triumphed. The deadened surface of the trunk was overgrown with new wood and the tree was the victor. Its inner vitality was, upon each occasion, sufficient to surmount the subtlety of its foes.

A short time ago a young minister whose faith in the Christian church seemed to be wavering said he believed the church as we know it today is doomed. He spoke of its seeming inability to cope with the mighty issues of our modern day. But his ominous words did not convince me. The Christian church has, upon occasion, reformed itself. It can and will do it again. Let us pray that its inner vitality, like the giant redwood, will yet overcome the power of its foes, even in our modern age.—*Scott C. Siegle, Federated Church, Orleans, Mass.*

Violins and Souls

Cyrus E. Albertson tells of a maker of violins who searched all his life for wood that would serve for making violins with a certain beautiful and haunting resonance. At last he succeeded when he came into possession of wood gathered from "the timberline," which is the last stand of the trees of the Rockies 12,000 feet above sea level. Up there where the winds

blow so fiercely and steadily that the bark to windward has no chance to grow, where the branches all point one way and where a tree to live must stay on its knees for life—that is where the world's most resonant wood for violins is born and lives and dies! Tell that little story to the world's heroes and it will need no elucidation.—*L. L. Dunnington, First Methodist Church, Iowa City, Ia.*

Our 'Cut-Flower Civilization'

Elton Trueblood remarks pertinently that "the danger of our time consists in the fact that ours is a cut-flower civilization." Cut flowers may be beautiful for a time, but one by one their petals drop and their beauty droops. Then they die; always they die because they have been severed from their sustaining roots. Men cannot live by principles unless their principles have roots in God. Men cannot live sacrificially unless the roots of the sacrifice are in the cross of Christ. Men cannot integrate their lives into the life of the world unless their sense of community has roots in the Fatherhood of God. Men must be ruled by God or civilization will flounder into the tyranny and despair of a new Dark Age.

The choice before us is all too clear. We shall decide to give our loyalty and devotion to the living God, revealed in Jesus Christ, or we shall be claimed by some communist Caesar waiting to move into the vacuum of our souls. We shall decide for one or the other even though we decide not to decide. Our time is short, too, for "the sky is red and lowering."—*Harold B. Walker, First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Ill.*

Our Modern 'Jungle'

A contemporary novelist, Frederic Prokosch, in his book *The Idols of the Cave,* has his characters say: "Well, our lives are changing. We used to feel the sunlight around us, and now we've entered the labyrinth. And the darkness keeps growing. And words mean less and less. They end by drawing a veil over the reality. A part of us remains bestial. In all of us there's a tiny cave, where the uncontrollable monster still lurks! . . . Here we live, in a city which is the apex of human calculation. A miracle of scientific reason. A dazzling triumph over the unknown. And yet . . . human nature seems more helpless than ever; lost in a jungle of uncertainties!"—*J. Paul Faust, First Baptist Church, Ardmore, Pa.*

Our Unclaimed Legacy

The probate judge in our county recently told me of a legacy that was unclaimed for twenty years. The money remained in the hands of the court while newspapers and letters were used to track down the legatee. Finally a man made his appearance who convinced the court that he was the rightful heir of the bequest. When proper legal conditions were met, $50,000 was turned over to the heir. In conversation with the judge the man stated that if he had claimed the bequest twenty years ago it would have saved his business during the depression and today he would be the owner of his own store and not working for the man who purchased his bankrupt business.

Contemporary man is something like this belated heir. We have not claimed our rightful inheritance and are living in impoverishment. In the closing days of his earthly ministry Jesus drew up his last will and testament and gave to the world an amazing bequest. Not gold, not real estate, not rare books. He willed us something more durable than gold, more substantial than property, more rare than first editions. He left us his peace. "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you." A unique bequest! But, what is most amazing, we have not claimed this divine legacy.—*Murray A. Figg, First Methodist Church, Carrollton, Ohio.*

They Served an Ideal

After her visit to the German concentration camps, Dorothy Thompson asked an old friend whom she found in Germany a simple question. He had served for twenty months in the dreadful death-house of Mauthausen, issuing from there half mummy and half man. Miss Thompson's question to him was this: "Who behaved best among the inmates — business men? intellectuals? what race? what political parties?" The friend, after thinking a long time, said: "Priests." Miss Thompson comments: "I shall remember that answer forever. In conditions of lowest bestiality they remained men who served an Image and an Ideal higher than the highest achievement of man, an Ideal in whom alone man attains significance and worth. They were those who knew that man is a soul." — *Kenneth Irving Brown, President Denison University.*

We Who Have Cast Out God

By THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

WE who have cast out God
Now rule as lords in the earth:
Ours are the land and the sea,
Ours are time, death and birth.

We need no Spirit to guide—
We who have conquered space.
Shall we, who know all things,
Tremble before God's face?

We have laid bare the stars;
What secrets have they now?
Atoms lend us their power—
Need we as weaklings bow?

Could God bring aid to us,
Masters of men and things?
Could suppliant prayers and vows
Give to our spirits wings?

We lift our heads no more
Unto a vaunted "Power."
Earth is man's destiny;
This is man's place and hour.

We who have cast out God,
Conquerors of the earth—
Fools are we, fearing to die,
Cursing the day of our birth!

Mankind's Real Benefactors

In an article published last year in the *Atlantic Monthly,* entitled "Civilization on Trial," Arnold Toynbee, author of the important book, *A Study of History,* asks the question, "Now who are the individuals who are the greatest benefactors of the living generation of mankind?" What names would we place on such a list. But Toynbee names these: "Confucius and Lao-tse; the Buddha; the prophets of Israel and Judah; Zoroaster, Jesus, Mohammed and Socrates." Everyone a spiritual leader! There isn't a king, a great conqueror, a fortune builder, a political tyrant! The great benefactors of mankind are those who seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness! — *Elmer E. Voelkel, Plymouth Congregational Church, Ft. Wayne, Ind.*

A Prophecy Fulfilled

Twenty-six years ago, following the close of the First World War, John R. Mott visited Japan and wrote that the door for Christianity was open in Japan. He came home, pleading for men and women who would take the gospel to the Japanese. He said in desperate earnestness: "Either we shall send fifty missionaries to Japan now or we shall one day send 500,000 soldiers to occupy Japan." Dr. Mott's words were indeed prophetic in the light of subsequent history.—*Harold B. Walker, First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Ill.*

Too Small a Job

Some years ago a brilliant young man went out to China as a missionary. He was fine looking, had a keen mind and was possessed of an attractive personality. His missionary salary amounted to about $1,200 a year. A big commercial concern decided it wanted him and offered him a job at a salary of $5,000. He turned it down. The firm raised the salary offer to $7,000. Again he said no. Finally the company offered him $10,000 but again he refused. Unable to understand why, representatives asked him to give a reason. He answered simply that he preferred to stay with the job he had. They asked whether it was a question of the salary not being big enough. He answered: "Oh the salary is big enough—but the job isn't."—*Charles F. Banning, Central Baptist Church, Norwich, Conn.*

Speaking Of Sermons—

G. Curtis Jones, minister of Seventh Street Christian Church in Richmond, Virginia, has one on "The New Look" which he preached at the baccalaureate service of Mary Washington College, University of Virginia, last May. He began by telling the story of a hospital vigil kept with a member of his church whose wife was being operated on. According to the account the worried husband said to him: "Preacher, when my wife gets over this, if she does, I am going to take her downtown and buy her that 'new look' from head to foot!" From there on he talks about the various aspects of the new look in advertising, international affairs; even the President of the United States, he says, has contrived a "new look." The point of the sermon, as he leads up to it, is the "new look" of Christianity—the "new life." His text is apropos: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has passed away, behold the new has come," from II Corinthians, 5:17, Revised Version.

Christian Greetings

Eugene M. Austin, pastor of Baptist Temple, Charleston, West Virginia, recently preached an interesting sermon with an expository beginning. He began with the text, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The introduction turned on the translation of the first word of this salutation of Paul to the Philippians: *"charis"*—"grace." The Greek form to begin a letter, he recalled, was *"charein"* — "greetings," but Paul changed the ending in this letter to give the word greater meaning—"not the casual greeting of friends, but grace—the forgiving love of God, the experience of which holds the church of Christ together in spite of oceans and mountain ranges," something that will not be defeated by "wars or iron curtains." The rest of the sermon is topical until he recalls his opening in the closing paragraph. He insists that the only way to recover the vitality of our common life is to come to be more aware of it. We must attack the great problems of life through attention to little things. "Paul, with the great dream of planting the gospel of Jesus Christ clear out in the farthest reaches of the Western world, but with his own life so shot through with Christ that he can hardly open a letter without changing his Greek formal greeting to a glowing benediction of God's grace; Jesus, before him, with his God-driven passion to win men from their sin and to show them the way to liberty and freedom from the chains of a tyrant Rome, but working it all out in terms that people could understand—a candle hid by a bushel basket, an enemy forgiven for the glory of God; Lincoln, stopping his horse to put a fallen fledgling bird back in its nest; Franklin, interrupting a bitter debate in the constitutional convention to suggest a time of prayer; and you, trying to put some meaning into the daily grind."

A Formula For Happiness

Eugene L. Smith of St. Mark's Methodist Church, Brooklyn, New York, had a sermon last Mother's Day that is much too good to be neglected by this department, even though the time to select a sermon for the next May issue is far away. As a matter of fact, it is actually a sermon on the Christian home and appeals to the conscience of fathers as well as mothers. He presents his lengthy text, Colossians 3: 12-17, as a "formula for family happiness." A home based on principles like those of his text, he says, paraphrasing Victor Hugo's diary, "is stronger than all the armies in the world." Hitler's *Wehrmacht,* he recalls, suffered its first major defeat at Stalingrad, the city of homes. Parents must invest themselves in their families and realize that it takes time to be a parent. This means that the father and the mother must take the lead in all the affairs of family life; they must play with their children and they must pray with them. He concludes with the thought: "Blessed is that mother, that father, who has planted within a child that seed of faith which is the secret of life's mastery."

'Speaking of Sermons'

So many fine sermons are offered for publication in the Pulpit that it is impossible to print them all. It is hoped, therefore, that a series of summaries and reviews of some of these fine manuscripts presented under the title "Speaking of Sermons," will enable the editors to share with the readers of this magazine the pleasure they have in reading them.

Each Day By Faith

"Troubled, but Not Anxious," is the title of a sermon by William H. Swarbrick, pastor of the Mt. Moriah United Lutheran Church, Anna, Illinois. He uses the Revised Standard Version of the text: "Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day." (Matthew 6:34). "Being a Christian is no guarantee," he says, "that we will have no trouble tomorrow. Else people would become Christian simply to avoid troubles. And if that were why people became Christian there would soon be no Christianity. On the contrary, it is quite certain that there will be problems, disappointments and dangers tomorrow. This is certain because of him whom we follow. His path led to a cross and he demands that his followers follow him in his path! In view of this fact, he lists three things that we must do. They are: to realize that tomorrow will have its trouble and welcome it; to take one day at a time—let today's trouble be sufficient for today; live each day by faith in the Son of God.

Action in Daily Living

Herbert D. Loomis, of West Winfield, New York, offers a sermon on the subject "Sick Humanity at the Door of the Church." "The church," he says, "like Dives, has fared sumptuously and a needy world is begging at its doors." The warning he would sound is well put in an illustration from the life of Francis of Assisi. Francis was being shown through the Vatican treasury. His guide pointed to the enormous wealth of the church and said, "No longer can the church say, silver and gold have I none"; to which the saint replied, "Neither can it say, Take up thy bed and walk." The church must learn to put its principles into action in everyday life.

Food For The Soul

A sermon by Roy L. Minch, Congregational minister in Malden, Massachusetts, is on the topic, "Spiritual Food." The spiritual foods are: "The food of quietness, the food of fellowship, the food of action." These three foods bring nourishment to the soul and are necessary for the strengthening of the Christian life. These constitute what Jesus had in mind when he said to his disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "If man is a body with a soul—or, as someone has put it, a soul with a body—then both must be fed. The claims of the body are more insistent and therefore more likely to be satisfied. We do not know quite as well where or how to get the soul's supplies and so we suffer from a slow starvation until some crisis is upon us and we fall fainting under its load. These three foods, if taken for our soul's nourishment, will make us strong."

G. H. B.

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